DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 747 SO 031 806

AUTHOR	Birthistle, Ursula
TITLE	Peace Education: The Importance of Social Engagement Skills and a Human Rights Framework.
PUB DATE	2000-04-00
NOTE	20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Civil Liberties; Conflict Resolution; *Curriculum Development; Educational Practices; Educational Theories; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *Peace; *Political Issues; *Social Action
IDENTIFIERS	*Northern Ireland; *Peace Education

ABSTRACT

This paper is set in the context of the political problems facing Northern Ireland and the educational responses to these problems. It focuses on the importance of globally accepted human rights values to a divided society and the role of education in promulgating these. The paper discusses the methodology of human rights education in the light of educational theory about the value of experiential learning, and the importance of self-esteem and positive attitudes toward others. It defines peace as on-going conflict resolution. Examples are given of good practice where schools have transformed the atmosphere and relationships through the introduction of democratic structures and the teaching of conflict resolution skills. Educational responses to the conflict in Northern Ireland are described, set against the backdrop of recent debates about values in education and education for democratic citizenship. Finally, the paper discusses some of the debates and research which, it is hoped, will help to inform curriculum development in Northern Ireland for the 21st century. The key messages from these lend support to the arguments in the paper for a greater emphasis on the development of the core social engagement skills required for the maintenance of peaceful relationships at all levels of society--locally, nationally, and globally. (Contains 42 references.) (BT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

Peace Education: The Importance of Social Engagement Skills and a Human Rights Framework.

ED 441 747

by

Ursula Birthistle

SO 031 806

Ursula Birthistle

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Peace Education: the importance of social engagement skills and a human rights framework.

AERA Conference – New Orleans – April 2000

Ursula Birthistle

School of Education, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland

Introduction

This paper is set in the context of the political problems facing Northern Ireland and the educational responses to these.

It is intended to discuss the importance of globally accepted human rights values to a divided society and the role of education in promulgating these.

The methodology of human rights education is discussed in the light of educational theory about the value of experiential learning, the importance of self-esteem and positive attitudes towards others.

Peace is defined as on-going conflict resolution. The maintenance of peace is therefore dependent on the development of good relationship or social engagement skills, which include the ability to deal with the breakdown of these relationships (conflict). This requires an ability to deal with the emotions involved and the development of empathy, which is a core value of human rights education.

Examples are given of good practice where schools have transformed the atmosphere and relationships through the introduction of democratic structures and the teaching of conflict resolution skills.

Educational responses to the conflict in Northern Ireland are described, set against the backdrop of recent debates about values in education and education for democratic citizenship.

Finally there is a discussion of some of the debates and research which it is hoped will help to inform curriculum development in Northern Ireland for the 21st century. The key messages from these lend support to the arguments in this paper for a greater emphasis on the development of the core social engagement skills required for the maintenance of peaceful relationships at all levels of society – local, national and global.

For the purposes of this discussion social engagement skills are defined as the skills of communication, co-operation, affirmation, critical and creative thinking, problem solving and the ability to deal with emotions.

1. The political and educational context.

After 30 years of inter-communal violence, a cease-fire was called in 1994 and, with the exception of a short breakdown, is still holding. Northern Ireland is now experiencing the birth-pangs of new political institutions, which, after a hopeful start, have now unfortunately been suspended due to disagreements about deadlines for the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons and about the actual suspension process itself.

Transition from the old confrontational politics to these new structures based on a more co-operative model is difficult. Radical change at this macro level needs the support of civic society if it is to succeed and be sustained. It is impossible for leaders to compromise and move to new positions if there is widespread resistance at grassroots level. The current hiatus has created a dangerous political vacuum and has led to bitter recriminations, which have heightened the lack of trust between parties. Opportunities to build trust between the two main communities and to change attitudes are hampered by the segregated nature of society itself. Segregation extends to many areas of society – housing (especially local authority), recreational areas, the workplace (to varying degrees) and the school system, which is highly segregated, with most Protestants attending the State (Controlled) sector and the majority of Catholics attending Catholic (Maintained) schools. There is a small but growing Integrated sector initiated by parents who want an alternative to the segregated system, however this only accounts for just over 3% of the school population.

Since 1990, Northern Ireland has had a common statutory curriculum, similar in many respects to that of the rest of the United Kingdom. A distinctive feature of the curriculum was the introduction in 1992 of two statutory cross-curricular themes, subsequently conjoined, Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage. These were specifically introduced as an educational response to the Northern Ireland conflict. The aim of the themes was initially stated as being *"to address issues of conflict, mistrust and division within Northern Ireland society and a wish to identify and appreciate those elements of culture which are commonly shared, as well as those which divide, this society."* This remit was later extended to encompass a global dimension, including environmental and development issues. (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), 1997).
In order to inform an impending curriculum review, CCEA undertook a very wide ranging consultation process involving teachers, pupils, and all constituencies with an interest in education and the future development of society in Northern Ireland. The aims of a series of conferences – *The Curriculum 21 Conferences* – included the provision of a forum for debating the needs of the curriculum for the 21st century and *"to consider and evaluate a broad range of research evidence and initiatives which make a valuable contribution to establishing a vision of future needs."*
(Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, 1999)

2. The Relationship between Peace, Education and Human Rights

> *Beyond the vision of nations, we should also encourage a sense of membership of the human race and of the commonality of fundamental human rights. Only in this way can we hope to begin addressing the problems of xenophobia and racism.*
>
> (Rowe, 1993)

There has been a great increase in interest in human rights as a result of the horrors of World War 2 and this is boosted today by the rise in the West of xenophobia and racism. The majority of countries right across the globe have signed up to agreements of different kinds relating to a wide variety of rights, including cultural, economic, social and political, in addition to basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. All the agreements, conventions, covenants or treaties have their origins in the United Nations Universal Declaration.

(Tarrow, 1987)

In the case of the UN Declaration, there is no court structure to enforce its tenets; it relies on moral sanctions. The moral weight of the Declaration has resulted in its tenets being incorporated into the national constitutions of many countries.
The European Convention on Human Rights does have the backing of the International Court of Human Rights, but legal sanctions are, according to Rene Cassin (Starkey 1991):

> *only a secondary safety valve: it is the education of young people and even of adults that constitutes the primary and real guarantee for minority groups faced with racial hatred that leads so easily to violence and murder.*

For declarations of human rights to have any effect requires that they be known.
The preamble of the UN Declaration of Human Rights states:

> *a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge.*

Article 26 (1) states: *Everyone has the right to education.*
and Article 26 (2):

> *Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."*

The Declaration therefore stressed the global dimension of education, education *as* a human right and education *about* human rights.
The incorporation of human rights education into national curricula transcends national boundaries and gives education a global dimension essential in today's increasingly interdependent world. The defence of human rights is dependent on fostering a consensus about these rights and creating a climate of opinion that will make abuses totally unacceptable.
(Ray & Bernstein Tarrow, 1987).

In 1989 The Convention on the Rights of the Child was unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly and in 1990 it became international law. It is the most widely accepted of international human rights instruments and, according to UNICEF (1995),

> *with its 54 articles encompassing not just civil and political but also social and economic rights, the Convention stands alone as the single most comprehensive instrument of human rights law.*

It has been ratified by all but two countries.

Article 29 of the Convention, which addresses the right to education, states:

1. *States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:*
   a)The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

   b)The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

c)The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origins;

e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

Article 42 states:

States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, which reviews progress in member countries in relation to the implementation of the Convention, made recommendations to the U.K. Government in 1995. These included a recommendation that information about the Convention should be made more widely known to both adults and children and that it should be included in teacher training. It was also recommended that childrens'opinions should be heard in matters that concerned them in school, including the running of the school and that teaching methods should

reflect the spirit and philosophy of the Convention, in the light of the general principles of the Convention and the provisions of Article 29 and that the State Party consider the possibility of introducing education about the Convention on the Rights of the Child into school curricula.

(UNICEF, 1995)

Societies in conflict such as Northern Ireland, Cyprus and Israel, which have been described as intractable due to the disputed national identity of the territory itself (Rose, 1990), lack the common goals, loyalties and bonding factors that generally apply in most stable societies. Because of this it is essential that some common bonds are identified that transcend the very real, fundamental differences that separate the communities and that can provide some sort of framework that will allow that society to function with a degree of normality. In Northern Ireland not only are the symbols of the state contentious, but also, for many in the minority community, the very institutions of law and order.
The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the various Conventions resulting from this would seem to provide a framework of globally accepted standards that could help to mediate relationships in the present political situation.
The advantage of this in the Northern Ireland situation is that it provides a set of moral values that cannot be seen as specific to either religious tradition.

A study into young people's understanding of human rights in Northern Ireland carried out in 1997 as part of a four country Commonwealth Values in Education study, recommended that human rights education be made more explicit in the curriculum. The study indicated that although human rights issues were implicit in a number of subjects, these were often not approached from an explicitly human rights

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

perspective. Pupils although aware of rights in certain specific instances, did not see the bigger picture and had little concrete knowledge of the UN Declaration or Conventions. (Smith & Birthistle, 1997)
The four-country study made recommendations to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education Conference in Botswana in 1997 and on the basis of this it was recommended that all Commonwealth countries review and strengthen their human rights education programmes.

The importance of establishing a culture of human rights has been recognised in many countries, not least those emerging from conflict such as South Africa and Northern Ireland, where the Belfast Agreement has led to the establishment of a Human Rights Commission which is in the process of embarking on a wide-ranging consultation process prior to drawing up a Bill of Rights. Part of its remit also is a long-term human rights education programme targeting all sectors of society.

3. Education *in* and education *about* Human Rights: the methodology of human rights education.

Democratic societies provide the optimum melieu for the full expression and experience of human rights. It is widely recognised that in the sphere of human rights education or education for democracy, a didactic approach is totally inadequate, that the *context* is as important as the *content*. This has challenging implications for the management of schools, which have traditionally been hierarchical, authoritarian institutions. Human rights education can be represented by a triangle made up of a thinking, a feeling and a doing side. (Osler, 1996) Each component is equally important. The feeling or affective component being the source of empathetic concern which will prompt action. The action/doing component is essential if young people are to develop the skills necessary to become participative citizens. The thinking or knowledge side is equally essential in providing the information about human rights and enablir critical reflection to take place which informs future action.
Dewey, a staunch proponent of education for and in democracy and in the unity of theory and practice, stressed the importance of learning through experience, observation and critical reflection. He saw the need to transform schools to represent *"embryonic community life –active with types of occupation that reflect life in the larger society"* and with changed pupil-teacher relations and attitudes to discipline. He envisaged the positive effects of this for humanity:

> *"When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guaranty of a larger society which is worthy, lovely and harmonious."*

(Dewey, 1974)

Dewey's theories although developed in the early 1900s still inform progressive educational thinking today. Methodologies proposed for human rights education and education for democracy all reflect this emphasis on experiential, co-operative learning and participation. This can be seen in directives from the Council of Europe (1997), the United Nations (1983) and in materials developed by many agencies such as UNICEF (1993) and Save the Children (1993).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This interactive methodology requires that children develop their social skills of communication, including their ability to listen to the views of others, skills of co-operation, problem solving and an ability to respect and affirm others. Fundamental to the ability to function adequately in a social context is the development of self-esteem. Research has shown that positive self-attitudes encourage a positive world view, enabling people to accept others whereas a negative self-image is more likely to result in the individual holding prejudiced views and rejecting other people. (Rubin, 1967)

The importance of encouraging positive attitudes towards self and others can be seen in the light of research carried out into the development of prejudicial attitudes among young children. Research indicates that children as young as three can start to develop negative attitudes towards other social groups. These attitudes are influenced by parents, television, peers and social factors. Evidence indicates that negative attitudes leading to prejudice could be counteracted by exposing the children to "counter-biases" or positive portrayals of the out-group and by contact with peers or others holding non-prejudicial or lower level prejudicial attitudes. (Connolly, P. 1998)

In a sectarian society such as Northern Ireland, attitudinal change at the interpersonal level although obviously desirable and necessary is insufficient in itself to change attitudes at the inter-group level. In an evaluation of cross-community holiday schemes Toner (Connolly, 1998) stresses the necessity to provide counter-biases at the group level, in other words Protestant children needed to be presented with positive images of Catholic children as a whole rather than of individual Catholic children who might then be regarded as exceptions and vice-versa.

Given the important influence of social context, it is therefore necessary to address sectarianism/racism within society as well as crucially within the family from the very beginning of the socialisation process of the child.

4. A definition of peace: Conflict Resolution

Banks (1987) states:

> *"Peace is not a state of general tranquillity, but rather a network of relationships full of energy and conflict which is nevertheless kept under societal control."*

He sees this control as being conflict resolution, which is not the imposition of a solution but rather the pointing out of options to those involved. He maintains that traditional adversarial techniques used in law, diplomacy and the military are inadequate because they are confrontational and are concerned with win/lose scenarios, whereas the problem-solving approach of conflict resolution is participative, bridge building and win/win. Other attributes of peace such as harmony, order and justice will be the outcomes of successful, well-managed conflict resolution. This problem solving approach requires the honing of social engagement skills – good communication ability, especially good listening skills, creative and critical thinking and crucially an ability to deal empathetically with the emotions involved in the conflict.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Addressing conflict requires a multifaceted approach. Galtung's triangular representation of conflict with direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence at the points indicates the interconnectedness of the different aspects of violence and the necessity to tackle all simultaneously. He stresses the importance of dealing not only with direct violence, but also with the less visible structural and cultural violence that infringe the welfare and identity needs of human beings. (Galtung,1985)

Cultural violence, according to Galtung, legitimises structural and actual violence and *makes reality opaque*. (Galtung, 1990) Cultural violence supports sectarian or racist beliefs and attitudes. Symbols, songs, myths and the strong messages portrayed on murals can be powerful indoctrinators.

Cultural violence is institutionalised in Northern Ireland, bolstered by the segregated nature of the society itself, including the segregated school system. The system of *cultural apartheid* in education was well described in research by Darby and Dunn (1987) and Murray (1985). Segregation on such a wide scale makes it difficult to break down the enemy image and the accompanying stereotypes and prejudice. This can only be achieved through contact and the establishment of co-operative relationships, which hopefully can develop into empathetic relationships. Cross-community contact schemes were introduced in an effort to address the problem, but evaluations of these indicate that the nature of that contact was vitally important. If the contact experience did not include meaningful communication it was of little real value. (Ruddle & O'Connor, 1992)

Inter-communal conflict of the nature of that in Northern Ireland cannot be resolved purely by decisions taken or settlements made at the macro political level. Centuries of history, historical memories, myths and antagonisms cannot be allowed to lie dormant and unchallenged only to resurface if tensions rise or a breakdown in that agreement happens at a future date. The fears, real and perceived, of both sides have to be heard and appreciated, deep hurts have to be acknowledged and people must build the trust necessary to live and work together. Unless reconciliation and peace-building happens at grass-roots level there is no supportive foundation for a peace negotiated at leadership level.

Evidence of just such a problem can be seen in Croatia, where the memories of World War 2 inter-communal atrocities were buried and unresolved in an effort to forge a common uniting history under the old Communist regime, only to violently erupt as an increasingly strident, insensitive Croatian nationalism and cultural violence resurrected old fears and hatreds among the minority Serb population. (Glenny, 1992; Wright, 1993)

Conflict, emotional healing and empathy

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a brave attempt to deal with the emotional damage of conflict. Recent public apologies by world leaders for wrongs committed by their country or church are another form of recognition of the need of victims to be heard, to have their hurts acknowledged and to hear an expression of contrition. Empathy is one of the underlying values of peace and human rights education. The most effective way to build empathy is by hearing the stories of others and through these, hearing their fears and understanding their needs. Rorty (1993) eulogises the power of this "sentimental education."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Empathy builds on our ability to be emotionally aware. The more we acknowledge and understand our own emotions the more skilled we become at reading the feelings of others. Learning to express our own emotions in appropriate ways and how to respond to and manage the emotions of others are fundamental social engagement skills. Empathy with the feelings of others develops the caring attitude. According to Martin Hoffman (Goleman, 1996. p.105) *"the roots of morality are to be found in empathy, since it is in empathising with the potential victims -- and so sharing in their distress that moves people to act to help them."* Hoffman proposes that the capacity for empathy leads people to follow certain moral principles.
Empathy develops progressively and by late childhood is well developed and can be extended to an entire group. *"That understanding, in adolescence, can buttress moral convictions centred on wanting to alleviate misfortune and injustice."* (Goleman, 1996).
Emotional intelligence and empathy are therefore crucial to the development of a caring society, one in which people respect the human rights of their fellow human beings and are concerned about issues of justice. Empathy allows us to see things from another's perspective and thus breakdown stereotypes and prejudice and cultivate attitudes of tolerance and acceptance of difference essential in today's pluralist societies. This allows, as Goleman puts it, *"people to live together in mutual respect and* (creates) *the possibility of productive public discourse. These are basic arts of democracy."*

5. Examples of good practice: "social harmony" in schools

Some interesting examples exist of the powerful effect that democratising a school and teaching young people to deal constructively with conflict can have.
Highfield Junior School in the U.K. is a case in point. (Alderson, 1997) A staff analysis of why the behavioural problems in the school had been so acute indicated a deficit of language skills. An audit of their language showed that many pupils could not explain feelings or interpret body language. This frequently resulted in violence. According to the Principal, they needed to be given the skills to create *"social harmony"*. It was felt that the educational system was not equipping them to deal with problems and make alternative choices. To develop the necessary skills a programme for creating *"social harmony"* was developed. This centred on *"child-speak"* objectives for circle-time, for example:

I CAN	control my anger follow instructions listen to others, etc.
I KNOW	my personal qualities how I feel, etc.
I UNDERSTAND	--
I FEEL	--

Conversation skills were encouraged including:
how to start a conversation
how to interrupt a conversation

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

how to greet people
how to make new relationships.
Pupils were taught about non-verbal communication; how to build relationships; use of personal space; making choices; how to handle success and failure; positive attention-gaining strategies and conflict resolution.

The programme led to a dramatic reduction in disruptive behaviour. This coupled with the development of democratic practices in the classroom and in all aspects of school life totally transformed the school. All relationships improved, including staff collegiality and pupils became a team instead of having gangs. Subsequently the benefits of these practices were recognised and adopted by neighbouring schools both primary and secondary.

Another example was given by Derry Hannam in his paper on *Schools for Democracy – from rhetoric to reality* (1999) in which he described the benefits of the democratic school based on human rights principles.

> *"School improvements were manifest in both the physical and the psychological environment. New decorations, footpaths and plants appeared but so did new kinds of relationships between students and students and between students and adults – not only teachers but the growing number of members of the local community who began to use the school as a learning resource. Both aspects enhanced the self-esteem of the students – and the staff! All of which enhanced learning even by the narrow measure of examination results."*

> *"The participative activities engaged the multiple intelligences described by Gardner (1993) and the emotional intelligence explained by Goleman (1996). --- Bullying became extremely unusual in open environments where the community could act through its own judicial system. This had significance for child protection."*

6. Educational responses to conflict

According to Dunn, (Cremin, 1993), much research and writing has been done world wide on conflict focussing on theoretical analysis but little on the practical approaches to conflict resolution through educational policies. He was also critical of the fact that although much is written about multicultural education it is never done from the perspective of communities actually in conflict situations.

Since the 1970s in Northern Ireland there has been a change in attitude within educational circles from viewing schools as 'oases of peace', insulating pupils from the problems of a violent society, to a realisation that schools must deal with the realities of the societal context within which they find themselves.
The main categories of intervention developed since then are:

- Contact schemes
- Integrated schooling
- Curricular interventions.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

It is not proposed to deal with the first two in the context of this paper except to say that in relation to contact schemes, whether in the context of cross-community programmes or in the context of educating children from both traditions together, it has been recognised that contact alone is insufficient, that issues relating to the conflict must be addressed in order to bring about attitudinal change. This includes addressing the fears, stereotypes and prejudices of all involved.
(Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Allport, 1970; Ruddle & O'Connor, 1992)
This is recognised in the Integrated school sector where the schools seek to give equality of expression to all traditions. (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) Statement of Principles)

Curricular Interventions

Early attempts at an educational response to improving inter-communal relations are outlined by Seamus Dunn (1993)
The most important development was the introduction of the statutory cross-curricular programmes Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage in 1992. There is no equivalent programme to EMU in the rest of the United Kingdom. The objectives of EMU as stated by the Northern Ireland Curriculum Council (1990) are:

> *to learn to respect and value themselves and others; to appreciate the interdependence of people within society; to know about and understand what is shared as well as what is different about their cultural traditions; and to appreciate how conflict may be handled in non-violent ways.*
>
> (Smith and Robinson, 1996)

A recent evaluation of EMU points to the difficulty teachers experience in dealing with it because of its "elusive" and sensitive nature. It also points to the absence of a human and civil rights dimension and education for political participation and these are seen as particularly relevant strands of EMU *"at a time when the broader society supports a commitment to political dialogue rather than political violence"*
Recommendations also included the introduction of teacher training in discussion of emotive, controversial issues.
(Smith & Robinson,1996)
It would seem that in the light of these criticisms that introducing a human rights dimension would go a long way to giving this whole area a conceptual framework, and would provide teachers with a concrete body of knowledge that would transcend any national, religious or party political agendas.
In addition, Northern Ireland is bound by the various commitments and conventions signed up to by the UK government. These include the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which, as previously stated, incorporates a commitment to education about Human Rights.

In response to these findings a programme was developed between the School of Education, University of Ulster, Ulster TV and Channel 4 TV. This was a series of TV and video programmes - *Off the Walls*, with accompanying teaching materials - *Speak Your Piece*, which aimed to encourage debate on controversial issues among 14 to 17 year olds in both formal and informal education settings. The issues included identity, culture, religion, politics and conflict. The programme was intended to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

support the delivery of EMU and Cultural Heritage. Evaluation of the programme identified the need for provision of personal and professional development of teachers to enable them to deal with emotional aspects of such discussions.
In many cases there was a willingness on the part of young people to engage in debate but teachers understandably expressed fears about opening up "a can of worms." As was stated already it is important to be able to hear the other side's story as part of the reconciliation process. This makes it essential that we develop methodologies that enable us to do so.

The values debate
There has been widespread debate in the UK and internationally about the perceived moral crisis in society, with rising crime rates, drug abuse and a rising level of xenophobia and racism in Western Europe. Coupled to this is the concern about the rising level of violence in schools. Increasingly in Northern Ireland as in many countries, the educational system is being expected to produce programmes to deal with the problems of society.

Discussion papers and reports on values have been produced by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, the Commonwealth Values in Education project, and the UNESCO CIDREE Values in European Education Project (Taylor, 1994)
A study on *Values in Education in Northern Ireland* (Montgomery & Smith 1997) indicated that teachers had a *"deep resistance"* to being *"asked to promote a prescribed code of moral behaviour"*. However, they were aware of the values dimension of much of both the formal, informal and hidden curriculum (e.g. the ethos of the school) and were in favour of a greater clarification and development of this area. One of the recommendations of that report was the integration of a values dimension within individual subjects and the strengthening of the values dimension in the cross-curricular themes, which include Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage.

The recommendations of this report led to the development of *Primary Values* (Montgomery & Birthistle, 1999). This is a literacy-based resource for Primary schools, which seeks to address the personal, social and civic development of children while at the same time meeting the literacy requirements of the curriculum. The stories chosen address the three main themes: Identity, Interdependence and Conflict. The approach taken is that of a *"community of inquiry"* based on Matthew Lipmann's philosophy for children. Children are encouraged to respectfully listen to each other's views, reflect on the issues and contribute to democratic debate. Issues are addressed at personal, local and global levels and children are introduced to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Supporting activities expand on the issues discussed. The methodology for these is based on the development of the skills required in building and maintaining peaceful relationships – affirmation communication, co-operation and problem conflict solving.

The values debate and concerns about the disaffection of young people from politics in the UK form the backdrop for a major report on education for citizenship and democracy – 'the Crick report' (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998). This recommended statutory citizenship education for all students and stated:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"--citizenship education in schools and colleges is to include the knowledge, skills and values relevant to the nature and practices of participative democracy; the duties, responsibilities, rights and development of pupils into citizens; and the value to individuals, schools and society of involvement in the local and wider community."

The document, in discussing the needs and aims of citizenship education, praises the submission made by the British Youth Council and comments that it encapsulates the thinking of many submissions and reflects what the Advisory Group (QCA, 1998) themselves would wish to see included:

"The curriculum should also cover practical skills that enable young people to participate effectively in public life and prepare them to be full citizens. It should enable children and young people to develop discussion, communication and teamwork skills. It should help them to argue cogently and effectively, negotiate successfully and co-operate with others. It should enable them to think for themselves, solve problems and make decisions effectively.

These practical skills should be backed up by mechanisms that enable children and young people to practice them."

To this the Advisory Group added the need to encourage volunteering and learning in and from the local community. The report considered that *"citizenship education creates common ground between different ethnic and religious identities."*

The importance of such developments in the context of peace building in Northern Ireland cannot be over-stated. As can be seen from these quotations, a prerequisite for a programme on citizenship education is the development of the social engagement skills discussed in this paper which will empower young people to take their place in society as active, informed citizens capable of peacefully solving the conflicts which are an inescapable part of the human condition.

A survey of young people's attitudes to democratic participation in society in Northern Ireland (Democratic Dialogue, 1997) indicated that young people wanted to participate in civic life either directly or through representative bodies. The report states *"pupils need more than knowledge, they need to be able to question received knowledge; they need skills, they need values and they need the opportunity to participate in situations which will allow them to practice these."*

The development of a democratic civic society in Northern Ireland based on human rights principles is essential if peace is to be maintained. This requires that each generation is educated in a way that prepares young people to participate, that equips them with the essential knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. As Dewey proposes, education through experience is the best way to learn.

A new Social, Civic and Political Education (SCPE) programme is a response to this need. The programme is, in sympathy with the ethos of democratic participation, being developed by the University of Ulster's School of Education in collaboration with teachers and students.

7. A curriculum for the 21st century in Northern Ireland.

In light of the global debates on values and citizenship, the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland instigated a wide-ranging consultation process and a series of conferences - *The Curriculum 21*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Conferences (1998) – to evaluate current thinking and research which might inform an impending curriculum review.

Professor Lilian Katz in a paper to an "Early Years" conference on *A Development Approach to the Education of Young Children* stressed the importance of the early social development of children. She reported that evidence suggested that children who do not develop adequate social competencies by the age of six are seriously at risk in terms of their mental health, low educational achievement, truanting, behavioural problems and relationship problems. This can lead to rejection by their peers and a tendency for them to form hostile groups with other similar young people. Inadequate impulse control such as the regulation of emotions, the ability to take turns and the ability to resolve conflicts were seen to be at the root of many social problems. Social competence was rated the single most important indicator of adult adaptation – above IQ, school grades or classroom behaviour.

Professor Colwyn Trevarthen in his paper at the same conference on *Starting Education Right: motives and values for learning under 5*, stated that educational theory had ignored the importance of interpersonal communication and sympathetic engagement for brain growth and the role of the emotions in the development of mechanisms of understanding.

Key messages from the conference on "Educating Intellect and Emotion" drew on the work of Professor Robert Sylwester (Oregon), Dr. Peter Fenwick (London) Professor Andy Hargreaves (Toronto) Some of these key messages were:

- Emotion was recognised as affecting motivation and attention, which in turn affects such activities as learning, memory and problem solving.
- Behaviour is determined by emotions. This can lead to the choice of inappropriate responses such as violence.
- The task of educators (both home and school) is not to provide answers, but to help pupils develop the ability to solve problems.

There is therefore much evidence to support the view that the health both of human beings and of their relationships is ultimately closely linked to their ability to deal with their emotions and the emotions of others. In view of the fact that emotions can influence all our actions, including our ability to solve problems, it is clearly important that in conflict situations the underlying emotions are recognised and adequately addressed. The role of the Arts has been found to be important in personal, social and emotional development and music has been found to stimulate brain activity. (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment(CCEA) 1998)

According to Sylwester, recent research in brain chemistry indicates that success and positive feedback raises the level of seratonin in the brain and leads to improved motor co-ordination and self-esteem. Conversely, failure and negative feedback reduce self-esteem and can lead to violence. This has important implications for the stability of society in relation to the provision of opportunities for people to experience a sense of fulfilment and self-worth (Moore, 1998). This finding, by providing biological evidence, strengthens the argument for the use of affirmation both in the classroom and outside. Recent reports of rising suicide rates, especially among young males, and reports about youth alienation indicate that a contributing factor is a sense of hopelessness and a lack of a sense of self worth. Affirmation

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

exercises form an important part of the methodology used in prejudice reduction and conflict resolution work that has been widely used in cross-community work in Northern Ireland. In particular the methodology used by the Quaker Peace Education Project (QPEP, 1988) strongly emphasises the use of affirmation coupled with exercises on communication, co-operation, emotional awareness and creative thinking. These build the social engagement skills necessary for the successful resolution of conflicts.

This can be represented diagrammatically by an iceberg, the top one-tenth of which represents that part of a conflict, which is apparent. The other nine-tenths of the conflict is likened to the under-water part of the iceberg, hidden from view but nonetheless present. This is composed of a number of factors:

- No communication
- No co-operation
- No affirmation
- No creative thinking
- Emotions not dealt with

If the immediately obvious part of the problem i.e. the tip of the iceberg is removed but the underlying causes are not, the problem will surface again.

As can be seen from research quoted in this paper, emotional competency and self-esteem are key to the development of socially well adjusted human beings capable of forming healthy relationships. High self-esteem enhances positive attitudes towards others reducing the likelihood of prejudicial attitudes being held.
Evaluations of Education for Mutual Understanding and of the Speak Your Piece project identified the inability to deal with emotions as one of the stumbling blocks to dealing with discussions of controversial issues.

It is apparent from research presented at these conferences that the emphasis in education needs to move from traditional teaching methods to a more holistic approach encompassing the development of the whole person. This is not only for reasons of personal development, but also because of the beneficial effects this approach has on academic performance. The educational establishment is also coming under pressure from business leaders who consider that the world of work in this century will require much more autonomous people with well-developed social skills, able to work in teams and think creatively. The c
onferences also acknowledged the necessity to educate for active, democratic citizenship in a pluralist society and to inculcate a sense of global responsibility for the stewardship of the world's scarce resources.

Conclusion

The creation of a culture of human rights is obviously important for all societies but it takes on an added significance for societies in conflict. The case has been made that human rights principles can provide a set of common values, which are globally accepted and therefore not the value system of one particular party to the conflict. The articles of the UN Declaration and of the various Conventions encourage a world view, a sense of shared humanity and of the interdependence of all peoples and of people with their environment.
Article 26 establishes the right of everyone to a holistic education, to the fullest development of their personality. It also promotes tolerance and peacemaking.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child expresses similar rights and advocates the *"preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance --."* As has been shown, recent educational thinking and research also support a much more holistic view of education than is currently normally delivered. It advocates a much greater emphasis on the development of the whole person including, crucially, their emotional development. The impact of self-esteem and emotional competency on the establishment and maintenance of peaceful relationships has been discussed and the importance of developing the skills to resolve the inevitable conflicts which are part of human existence.

The effectiveness of learning through doing is widely accepted and education for human rights and democracy requires an experiential methodology. Some examples were given of just how effective and transformative such an approach can be Educational responses to the conflict in Northern Ireland have been described and this paper has attempted to show the importance of providing young people with the essential skills to deal with difficult, emotive issues that are an integral part of conflict.

Almost all countries are signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and as such we are obliged *"to make the principles and provisions widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike."*

References

Alderson, P. (1997) (Ed.) *Changing Our School*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Allport, G.W. (1970) *The Nature of Prejudice*. London: Addison-Wesley

Banks, M. (1987) *"4 Conceptions of Peace"* in. *Conflict Management and Problem Solving: interpersonal and international applications*. Sandole, D., & Sandole-Staroste, I., (Eds.) Pub: New York, London. New York U.P., Pinter .

Bernstein Tarrow, N. (1987) *Human Rights and Education*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Bourne, R. (1994) *Commonwealth Values in Education*. Human Rights Unit Occasional Paper, London: Commonwealth Secretariat Pall Mall.

Connolly, P. (1998) *Guidelines for the development of a series of television programmes directed at anti-sectarian work with children in their early years*. Belfast: Cultural Diversity Programme of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). (1997). *Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage: Cross-Curricular Guidance Material*. Belfast: CCEA.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. (1999) *Developing the Northern Ireland Curriculum to meet the needs of young people, society and the economy in the 21st Century*. Belfast: CCEA.

Council of Europe. (1997). *Initiative for Training for Democratic Citizenship: Teaching documents*. Council of Europe Bosnia-Herzegovina Project Group: Strasbourg.

Darby, J. and Dunn, S. (1987) *Segregated Schools: The Research Evidence* in: Osborne, R.D., Cormack,R.J., & Miller, R. L., (Eds.) *Education and Policy in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Policy Research Institute

Democratic Dialogue. (1997) *Politics: the next generation*. Belfast: Democratic Dialogue.

Dewey, J. (1974) *The Child and the Curriculum* and *The School and Society*. Combined edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Dunn, S. (1993) *The Role of Education in Conflict Societies* in: Cremin, P. (Ed.) *Education for Peace*. Limerick, Ireland: Educational Studies Association of Ireland & Irish Peace Institute.

Galtung, J. (1990) *Cultural Violence*. Journal of Peace Research, vol.7, no.3. (p.291-305)

Galtung,J., (1985) *25 Years of Peace Research: 10 Challenges and Some Responses* Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 22, no. 2 (p.141-157)

Glenny, M. (1992) *The Fall of Yugoslavia*. London: Penguin Books

Goleman, D. (1996) *Emotional Intelligence*. London: Bloomsbury

Hannam, D. (1999) *Schools for Democracy – from rhetoric to reality* a paper to the "10 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child" conference. Dublin: Amnesty International & Curriculum Development Unit (CDU/CDVEC)

Hewstone, M., & Brown,R. (1986) Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Montgomery, A. & Birthistle, U. (1999) *Primary Values: a literacy based resource for primary schools*. Belfast: Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

Montgomery, A. and Smith, A. (1997) *Values in Education in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

Moore, Anne (1998) (Ed) Report on Curriculum 21 Conference: *Mindpower 21: Educating Intellect and Emotion*. Belfast: CCEA

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Murray, D. (1985). *Worlds Apart: Segregated Schools in Northern Ireland.* Belfast: Appletree Press.

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) Statement of Principles.

Osler, A. & Starkey, H. (1996) *Teacher Education and Human Rights.* London: Fulton.

Quaker Peace Education Project (QPEP) (1988) *Ways and Means:* An approach to problem solving. The Handbook of Kingston Friends Workshop Group. Kingston upon Thames (UK). .

Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) (1998) *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools.* London: QCA

Ray, D. & Bernstein Tarrow, N. (1987) *Human Rights and Education: An Overview* in: Bernstein Tarrow, N. (Ed.) *Human Rights and Education* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Rorty, R. (1993) *Human Rights, Rationality and Sentimentality* in: Shute, S. & Hurley, S. (Eds.) *On human rights.* The Oxford Amnesty Lectures. N.Y.: Basic Books.

Rose, R. (1990) *Northern Ireland: The Irreducible Conflict* in: Montville, J.V. (Ed.) *Conflict and Peace-making in Multi-Ethnic Societies.* Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.

Rowe, D. (1993) *Different Approaches to Citizenship – Who is right?* in: *Citizenship Education in Secondary Education.* Report of the 60th Council of Europe Teachers' Seminar, June 1993. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Rubin, I.M., (1967). *Increased Self-Acceptance: a Means of Reducing Prejudice,* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 5, (p.233-238). in: Ruddle, H. and O'Connor, J. (1992) *A Model of Managed Co-operation. An evaluation of Co-operation North's School and Youth Links Scheme.* Limerick: Irish Peace Institute.

Ruddle & O'Connor, (1992)) *A Model of Managed Co-operation. An evaluation of Co-operation North's School and Youth Links Scheme.* Limerick: Irish Peace Institute.

Smith, A. and Robinson, A. (1996) *Education for Mutual Understanding: The Initial Statutory Years.* Coleraine: University of Ulster.

Smith, A., Birthistle, U. (1997) *Young People's Understanding of Human Rights in Northern Ireland.* Coleraine: University of Ulster.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Starkey, H. (1991) (Ed.) *The Challenge if Human Rights Education.* London: Cassell

Sylwester, R. (1998) *What brain research can and cannot tell us about assessment* in: paper delivered to the Curriculum 21 Conference: *Mindpower 21: Educating Intellect and Emotion.* Belfast:CCEA

Taylor, M. (1994) *Values Education in Europe: a comparative overview of a survey of 26 countries in 1993.* Slough. CIDREE. UNESCO. NFER.

UNICEF (1995) *The Convention on the Rights of the Child.* p.1. London: UNICEF

UNICEF - U.K. + Save the Children + Oxford Development Unit (1993)
1-*The Whole Child* The Participation Articles
2- *It's Our Right* The Provision Articles
3. *Keep Us Safe* The Protection Articles
4. Teachers Handbook
London:UNICEF (UK Committee); Save the Children Fund.

United Nations (1983) *Human Rights: 50 questions and answers about human rights and United Nations activities to promote them.* United Nations Department of Public Information.

Wright, F. (1993) *Integrated Education and new Beginnings in Northern Ireland.* Working paper six. Northern Ireland: Corrymeela Press

BEST COPY AVAILABLE